



NEVADA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

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CURRENT PUBLIC OPINION ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE

The issue of criminal justice, and specifically how to "punish" those convicted of crimes, is clearly an emotional issue as well as an intellectual one. Concerns about personal safety and security are at the forefront of the emotional side of the equation. Many times it is the extreme view that gets the most attention. However, current public opinion research on the subject indicates that support for punitive measures or retribution involving mandatory prison sentences is a minority view among Americans.

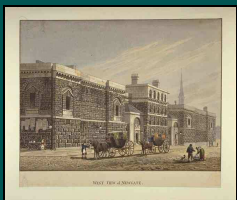
The majority feel that the criminal justice system needs to be *fair* (to the victim, to the community, and to the criminal), *balanced*, and *effective* with a focus on *rehabilitation*. This view does not seem to be rooted in purely humanitarian concerns, but stems from a belief that rehabilitation is a more effective way to create safe communities. This emerging opinion also appears to be a reaction to perceived failures of recent "get tough" policies. At the same time, tolerance for repeat offenses is low. Two-thirds of the public feel that parolees who fail drug tests should be sent back to prison. The irony here is that many citizens may actually fault the prison system for its ineffective rehabilitation programs. There seems to be a real tension between penalizing individual transgressions while at the same time ascribing those failures to systemic or institutional ineffectiveness.

PREVENTION-CORRECTIONAL HISTORY

In 1636 the Massachusetts Bay Colony listed thirteen crimes that warranted execution, including murder, practicing witchcraft, and worshipping idols. In early New York State, 20% of offenses, including pickpocketing, horse stealing, and robbery, were capital crimes (warranting the death penalty). Jails were used to hold prisoners awaiting trial or sentencing or as debtors' prisons, but were not the punishment itself. The Puritans of Massachusetts believed that humans were naturally depraved, which made it easier for some of the colonies and the first states to enforce harsh punishments. In addition, since Puritans believed that humans had no control over their fate (predestination), many early Americans felt there was no need for rehabilitation.

"The punishments inflicted for prison offenses were flogging, confinement in stocks in the dungeons, being fed on bread and water during the time, double or treble sets of iron, hanging by the heels, etc. A bell summoning the prisoners to work brought them up from the cavern beneath through a trap door, in irregular numbers, two or three together, and sometimes a single one alone, when under guard of armed soldiers they were conducted across the yard to the smithy. The prisoners were heavily ironed and secured by fetters and being therefore unable to walk made their way by jumps and hops. On entering the smithy some went to the side of the forges where collars dependent by iron chains from the roof were fastened around their necks and others were chained in pairs to wheelbarrows." Richard H. Phelps-1860.

After the American Civil War (1861–65) huge industrial prisons were built to house thousands of prisoners in the Northeast, Midwest, and California. The western states used their old territorial jails while the South relied on leasing out prisoners for farm labor. However, a growing number of prison reformers were beginning to believe that the prison system should be more committed to reform. In 1870 the newly established National Prison Association (which later became the American Correctional Association) issued a Declaration of Principles. The philosophy of the Auburn system (fixed sentences, silence, isolation, harsh punishment, lockstep work) was considered degrading and destructive to the human spirit.



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The values in the Declaration of Principles included the following:

- The penal system should be based on reformation, not suffering, and prisoners should be educated to be free, industrious citizens able to function in society, not orderly inmates controlled by the guards.
- Good conduct should be rewarded.
- Indeterminate sentencing (not a mandated exact sentence) should include the ability for prisoners to earn their freedom early through hard work and good behavior.
- Citizens should understand that society is responsible for the conditions that lead to crime.
- Prisoners should recognize that they can change their lives.

Zebulon Reed Brockway (1827 – 1920) was a [penologist](#) and is sometimes regarded as the "father of prison reform" in the [United States](#). Brockway was born in [Lyme, Connecticut](#) and began his career as a prison guard at the state prison in Wethersfield, Connecticut. Later he worked as warden of the municipal alms house in [Albany, New York](#) for two years. By 1854, he was head of the [Monroe County Penitentiary](#) in [Rochester, New York](#). In 1861, Brockway became the head of the prison in [Detroit](#), where he attempted to introduce an "indeterminate sentence". While warden at the [Elmira Reformatory](#) in [Upstate New York](#) from 1876 to 1900, Brockway introduced a program of education, training in useful trades, physical activity, indeterminate sentences, inmate classification, and an incentive program. The following excerpt is from his autobiography, [Fifty Years of Prison Service](#), which he wrote in 1912.

"The trades school remained under the direction of Mr. Clark, who was a graduate of the mechanical engineering department of Cornell University. With the advantage of the thirteen years of its existence he selected, adopted, and developed industrial arts to meet the individual needs of the prisoners. In the year 1896, thirty-six trades and branches of trades were taught to the resident population of 1500; and the entire enrollment, 2111, received trade instruction. The thoroughness and practical value of this trades instruction at the time is shown by the published statement of 1896. Of the 329 men paroled that year, 324 went to the trade or employment acquired or arranged at the reformatory; four had trades on their admission to the reformatory; only one was discharged without trades training. Closely co-ordinated to the trades school was the manual training department organized in 1896, which when it was fully developed embraced 500 of the 1500 prisoners in confinement. The class was composed of the prisoners who, during a trial period of six months, did not keep pace with the progress made by the others in the regular institution regime. They were deficient in a single faculty such as the arithmetical or they were incapable of the ordinary prudential selfregulation of their demeanor. In respect to the number of pupils, the completeness of control, the analysis of capacities, the diversity of exercises, the precision of adaptation of the tool and other processes to group and individual needs, and the ability, energy, and devotion of the director, Professor Bates, probably no other manual training experiment anywhere was ever so well equipped and worked. The work of the physical training department and of the school of letters, which have been already sufficiently described, was closely united to the manual training, so that for the pupils a threefold potency urged improvement by means of physical, manual, technical, and good pedagogical education. These pupils, too, were included in the general educational effect of the kaleidoscopic interchangeable classifications of the prisoners throughout their regulated association which were then maintained and afterwards perfected. Classifications were not haphazard arrangement but were based on ascertained actual differences. The biographical record books give succinctly the diagnosis and treatment prescriptions made personally by the general superintendent, when the prisoner was first received at the reformatory, and afterwards, and the notes made from time to time of progress and changes. The records supply the severest possible test of the correctness of the judgment about the prisoners made upon their admission to the reformatory and of the wisdom or otherwise of the prescription and the procedure; and it is gratifying to be able to say that the accuracy and efficiency revealed by these records prove the practical value of the system as it was then administered."

In 1893, Brockway's administration endured investigations into accusations of brutality at Elmira. In 1900, Zebulon Reed Braokway was forced to resign in the face of mounting criticism of his administration.

In 2009, the [Pew Center on the States](#), a non-aligned think tank, reported that for the first time in thirty-eight years, the number of state prisoners in the US has dropped.

PREVENTION-CORRECTIONAL HISTORY

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From 1972, when there were only 174,379 prisoners, to 2009, when the number had shot to more than 1.45 million, the inmate population increased every year. But in 2010 it has dropped nationally by 4000, which reflects a decline in prisoners in 26 states.

Some of this is due to budgetary pressures, most notably in cash-strapped California, but the Pew report points to other reasons, which it forecasts will mean the decline is a trend that is here to stay. Public opinion is turning against imprisonment. Even in conservative Texas, more than seventy percent believe that a mandatory intensive treatment program is better than prison.

There is also much greater scrutiny of whether the money prisons spend is leading to a reduction in crime, and there are now more sophisticated psychological learning, risk-profiling and monitoring tools that allow for authorities to tailor treatment and assess how to reduce the chances of offenders being exposed to opportunities to commit further crimes.

WORLD'S MOST SECURE PRISON IN FLORENCE, COLORADA

ADX Florence is a federal prison, comprising a 37-acre (15 ha), 490-bed complex at 5880 Highway 67, Florence, Colorado. It is one of three correctional facilities of the Florence Federal Correctional Complex (FFCC), each with a different overall security level.

ADX Florence generally houses around 430 male prisoners, each assigned to one of six security levels. ADX Florence was designed jointly by DLR Group and LKA Partners of Colorado Springs.

Most cells' furniture is made almost entirely out of poured concrete, including the desk, stool, and bed. Each chamber contains a toilet that shuts off if plugged, a shower that runs on a timer to prevent flooding, and a sink missing a potentially dangerous trap. Rooms may also be fitted with polished steel mirrors bolted to the wall, an electric light, a radio, and a television that shows recreational, educational and religious programming.^[12] These are considered privileges that may be taken away as punishment, so they are placed and remotely controlled such that the inmate does not actually come into contact with them. The 4 in (10 cm) by 4 ft (1.2 m) windows are designed to prevent the prisoner from knowing his specific location within the complex because he can see only the sky and roof through them. Additionally, inmates exercise in what has been described as an "empty swimming pool," so they do not know their location for possible escape.^[13] Telecommunication with the outside world is forbidden, and food is hand-delivered by correctional officers. The prison as a whole contains a multitude of motion detectors and cameras, 1,400 remote-controlled steel doors, and 12 ft (3.66 m) high razor wire fences, laser beams, pressure pads, and attack dogs guard the area between the prison walls and razor wire.

Eric Rudolph, the Olympic Park bomber, lamented in a series of 2006 letters to a Colorado Springs newspaper that the ADX is meant to "inflict misery and pain."^[14] Charles Harrelson, who was sent to ADX after a failed attempt to escape from a Georgia prison, said "Part of the plan here is sensory deprivation," and "It could be infinitely worse."^[13] A former ADX warden described the place as "a cleaner version of Hell." There have been hundreds of "involuntary feedings" and four suicides.^[15] Most recently, in June 2009 Richard Reid, commonly known as the "shoe bomber", went on a hunger strike and was force-fed.



WORLD'S MOST LUXURIEST PRISON IN LEOBEN AUSTRIA

Perched on a slope outside the small Austrian town of Leoben — a sleek structure made of glass, wood and concrete, stately but agile, sure in its rhythms and proportions: each part bears an obvious relationship to the whole. In the daytime, the corridors and rooms are flooded with sunshine. At night, the whole structure glows from within. A markedly well-made building, and what is it? A prison.

The place must be a country club for white-collar criminals. (No, it holds everyone from prisoners awaiting trial to the standard run of felons.) Then it must cost a fortune. (A little more than other prisons, maybe, but not by much — as a rule, the more a corrections center bristles with overt security, with cameras, and squads of guards, and isolation cells, the more expensive it's going to be.) And that's glass? (Yes, though it's shatterproof. And yes, those are the cells and that is a little balcony, albeit caged in with heavy bars, and below it is a courtyard.)

The building looks inviting, like a college library during winter break — or it would have, anyway, were it not for the razor wire coiled along the concrete wall of the yard and the sentence carved below it, a line from the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (which the United States signed and ratified) that reads: "All persons deprived of their liberty shall be treated with humanity and with respect for the inherent dignity of the human person."

Inside the prison it felt like Sunday afternoon, though in fact it was a Tuesday. There was a glassy brightness over everything, and most surprising, an unbreakable silence. Prisons are usually clamorous places, filled with the sound of metal doors opening and closing, and the general racket that comes with holding large numbers of men in a confined space. Noise is part of the chaos of prison life; Leoben was serene. I mentioned as much to Hohensinn, and he smiled and pointed to the whitewashed ceilings. He had taken great care to install soundproofing.- Jim Lewis, Author



IN OUR NEXT ISSUE:

WORLD'S STRANGEST PRISON

WORLD'S MOST POPULAR PRISON